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X-FILES RETURNS!

**Everything you need to know
for the new season**





GREAT X-PECTATIONS

Mulder and Scully are back on the case for a reboot of the beloved sci-fi series *The X-Files*

BY MICHAEL SCHNEIDER





DAVID DUCHOVNY IS clad in the classic FBI G-man outfit: government-issue blue shirt with a short red tie. Sitting behind a large metal desk, he leans forward, picks up a pile of pencils and, one by one, starts throwing them at a familiar poster. You know the one.

Bankers' boxes stuffed with folders marked "X-Files" line the wall. Slapped on a small door is a nameplate designating this the office of Fox Mulder. After a few throws, one of Duchovny's pencils sticks, right above the words I WANT TO BELIEVE. He points to it proudly. Soon, he's making the shot consistently: "I can go pro," he jokes.

Anything is possible, including the return of *The X-Files*, shooting six new episodes to premiere on Fox following the NFL's NFC championship game on Sunday, January 24.

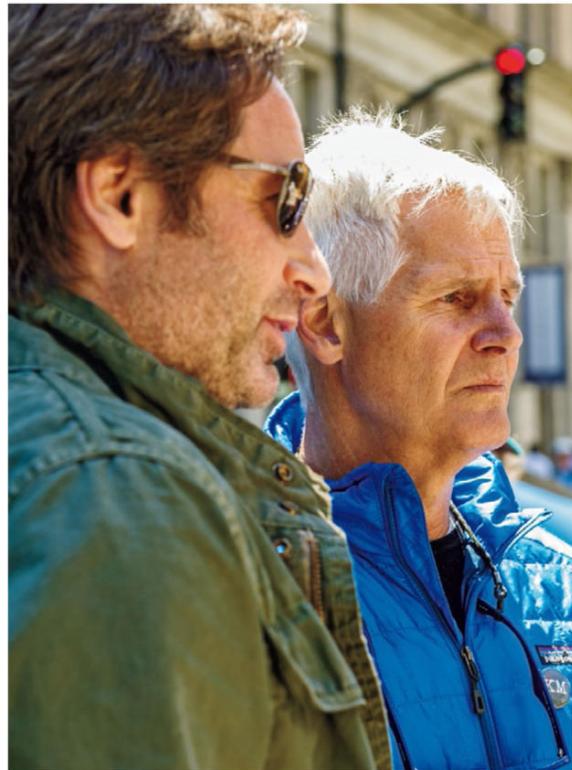
On a breezy July day, in an abandoned mental hospital just outside of Vancouver, Duchovny (Mulder) and Gillian Anderson (Dana Scully) have been transported back to the basement of the FBI headquarters in Washington, D.C.

A lot has happened in the 22 years since Mulder the truthteller and Scully the skeptic first paired up to investigate unexplainable paranormal phenomena. For one thing, an older and wiser Mulder is wrestling with the kind of doubt that comes with having seen everything yet still having no answers.

"I'm a middle-aged man," he tells Scully while tossing out X-Files cases that have since been revealed as publicity stunts, frat pranks and practical jokes. "And I'm finding it hard to maintain the enthusiasm of my youth. Is this really how I want to spend my life, chasing monsters?"

Cue the chorus of several million *X-Files* fans, all screaming in unison, "Yes!"

The X-Files, which aired from 1993 to 2002, had been dormant ever since the second film, released in 2008, was met with lukewarm response. Creator Chris Carter, who spent much of the last decade exploring other pursuits (including a fellowship at the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics at the University of California at Santa Barbara), wrote a third movie—which has yet to see the light of day.



"It wasn't as if I let those characters go for eight years," he says. "I was noodling. Every time I open up the newspaper, I see a new X-Files story. I've been doing it for so long, it's a part of my thought process."

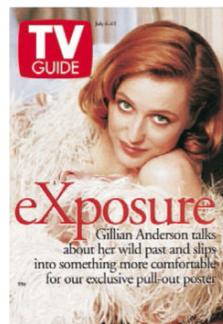
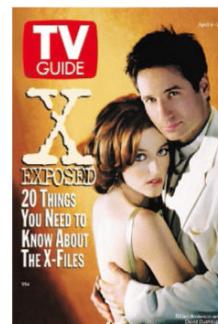
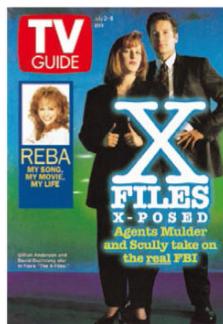
But after the last movie disappointed, 20th Century Fox's film studio wasn't interested in another *X-Files* installment. "We thought it was probably over," says Duchovny. "That was disappointing. However dark *The X-Files* got, there was always a tone of wonder and hopefulness, in a way that I think the last movie lost hold of. It was merely dark. If you wanted to end *The X-Files*, that was not the way to end it."

Anderson agrees: "It wasn't the right way to go out. It would be nice if there were some kind of closure."

The idea of bringing *The X-Files* back wasn't on their minds when Duchovny, Anderson, Carter and many of

We've got you covered

Our storied history with
The X-Files





Duchovny with Carter (left) and on set with Anderson and McHale

the producers gathered on stage in 2013 at a standing-room-only Comic-Con panel organized by TV GUIDE MAGAZINE. Yet it was there that the seeds were planted.

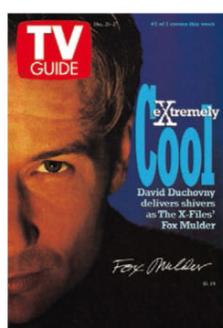
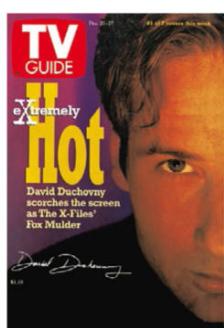
"We had lunch with Chris, maybe in September or October after that panel," says Fox Television Group chairman Dana Walden. "I think after Comic-Con he realized that the appetite is as great as ever. We broached the idea of doing an event series."

The stars were game once they realized Fox wasn't asking for many episodes. "Both of us were like, 'There's no way we're going to do [13],' " Duchovny says.

Still, Carter was busy with his Amazon Prime Video show *The After* (which was later scrapped), while Anderson and Duchovny were starring on other TV shows.

"We were probably in the planning stage for about a year before everyone got on the same page," Walden says. "Gillian lives in the U.K., David lives in New York and Los Angeles and Chris is here in L.A. It was hard finding a window that they could all be together in the same city. Putting all the pieces together was just so challenging. Not until we had a signed deal did I feel 100 percent certain that this was a reality."

Carter decided to write and direct three of the six episodes and brought on *X-Files* vets Glen Morgan, Jim Wong and Darin Morgan to write and direct one each. "There's a little bit of excitement, some trepidation and some nervousness," Darin Morgan says. "It's hard to know what the reaction is going to be."



TRUTH SEEKING

Eager to do a little homework before diving into the new episodes of *The X-Files*? We asked creator Chris Carter for some clues on what to bone up on, as well as a few things that he says inspired this season.

—MS

EDWARD SNOWDEN The computer expert and former National Security Agency subcontractor, currently exiled in Russia, leaked top-secret documents that revealed the U.S.'s global surveillance of Internet and phone data. "When we went off the air in 2002, we had almost absolute



Snowden

trust in our government and our representatives to protect us," Carter says. "So many of those powers that we gave them have been abused. The shocking thing to me is how little outcry there is when we find out that they're spying on us. I think it's because millennials freely give up their privacy online now, thinking nothing bad is ever going to happen."

MYCELIUM RUNNING The Paul Stamets book, subtitled "How Mushrooms Can Save the World," looks at how certain fungi could be bred to decompose toxic waste, stop viruses and protect humans from nerve gas.

JOEL MCHALE'S 2014 WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS' DINNER SPEECH "I saw him do that and I thought, 'This is the guy,'"

Carter says. "He was great and fearless. He was an easy cast."

CRISPR-CAS9 This new genetic technique enables DNA to be easily edited. Those tweaks would then be inherited by the person's offspring, making permanent changes to the human gene pool and potentially altering the nature of humans. In December, a group of scientists called for a moratorium on proceeding with such changes.

MY STRUGGLE Norwegian author Karl Ove Knausgaard made waves in his native country by examining every sordid detail of his family's life in a six-book series.

THRIVE MOVEMENT Led by Foster Gamble, this conspiracy site (and movie) pushes for smaller government. It's a hub that Mulder might frequent, one of many conspiracy sites that Carter researched for the show. "You read them, and every one of them have elements of what I feel are sort of credible theories," he says. "There's a lot of stuff I just discount out of hand, but I'm a skeptic by nature."

NEW PSYCHEDELIC DRUG RESEARCH According to *The New Yorker*, "a renaissance of psychedelic research [is] taking place at several universities in the United States.... Scientists are eager to reconsider the therapeutic potential of these drugs, beginning with psilocybin," which is being used in clinical trials to treat alcohol addiction.

FREE ENERGY A term used in the premiere, and relevant to the show's mythology. Many people believe that a power source exists that can generate low-cost electricity, ending the need for fossil fuels. But conspiracy theorists suggest that the technology is being suppressed.

Ultimately, Carter decided to put a new twist on the show's alien-invasion mythology. What if it was the government, and not an alien life-form, that was behind some of the world's biggest unexplained events? "My feeling was this had to follow perfectly from where the original series left off, but it didn't necessarily have to take everything as gospel that had come before," he says.

Community's Joel McHale stars in the first episode as Tad O'Malley, a Glenn Beck-like TV host who traffics in conspiracy—and is a fan of Mulder's work. "He believes everything Mulder has said, and all those theories, but has made millions of dollars off of it," says McHale, a longtime fan of the franchise. "It's one of the most original science-fiction ideas that I have ever read. There's no rehash here."

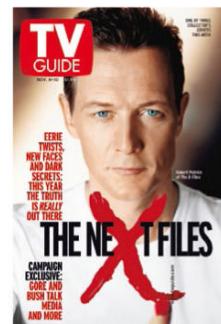
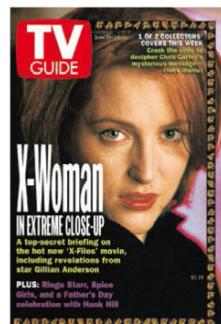
It's O'Malley who helps trigger a reopening of the *X-Files*—and a reunion between Mulder and Scully. Indeed, the couple, last seen at the end of the 2008 movie heading into the sunset, have split up in the interim.

But take a deep breath: Duchovny believes Mulder and Scully will eventually get back together. "I think Chris likes to give the fans what they want," he says. "Personally, I'm way more miserly. I'd be like, 'Eff you guys, they're staying apart.' That's why I don't have any friends."

Plenty of other surprises are in store, including the resurrection of the sinister Cigarette Smoking Man (William B. Davis), who was supposedly killed in the series finale. Hints Carter: "In Episode 6, you're going to see exactly what the product of that failure to die was."

Also back from the "dead" is conspiracy trio the Lone Gunmen (Tom Braidwood, Bruce Harwood and Dean Haglund). "You see them in an interesting way in Episode 5," Carter teases.

FBI Assistant Director Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) will once again be keeping an eye on Mulder and Scully. Other returning



TOP LEFT: THE GUARDIAN VIA GETTY IMAGES. TOP RIGHT: ED ARQUEL/FOX

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—Executive Producer Chris Carter

players are FBI Special Agent Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish, who joined the series in Season 8) and Margaret Scully, Dana's mother (Sheila Larkin). "I felt that there were certain command performances that you had to meet," Carter says.

Besides McHale, guest stars this time include Rhys Darby (*Flight of the Conchords*), Robbie Amell (*The Flash*), Lauren Ambrose (*Six Feet Under*) and Kumail Nanjiani (*Silicon Valley*), who's such a fan he even hosts a regular podcast about *The X-Files*. Annet Mahendru (*The Americans*) shows up in the first episode as Sveta, an abductee who may be the key to uncovering the truth—it's men, not aliens, she says, who have taken her.

Carter split the six-episode order into two conspiracy episodes (the premiere and finale) book-ending four so-called "monster of the week" episodes. Darin Morgan, known for some of *The X-Files*' most irreverent episodes (including the Emmy-winning "Clyde Bruckman's Final Repose"), brushed off an old classic monster-movie concept of his to pen the third installment, "Mulder and Scully Meet the Were-Monster." "There are quite a lot of nods that longtime fans will get," he says. It's this episode where Mulder faces a bit of a midlife crisis. "Mulder's at that stage where he's back, but he's not sure if it's really all worthwhile," he adds. "Hopefully by the end of the episode that fire has been reignited in him."

Back on set, Darin Morgan is directing a classic Mulder-Scully back-and-forth as the characters dissect a corpse. Suddenly a cell phone rings, ruining the shot. It's coming from the pants pocket of the actor playing the stiff. As if he were answering the phone, Duchovny quips, "Dead man's ass!"



The stars are clearly enjoying this revisit. "The most fun part," Duchovny says later, "is just doing this thing again that we do. There weren't really any missed beats. It's just a weird thing we can fall into."

Carter hopes the hard-core fans are satisfied, and since much is left unresolved at the end of Episode 6, another miniseries is possible. "I initially had an expectation that six would be it," Anderson says. "I had no interest in doing any more. I'm a bit more open to the idea."

Adds Duchovny: "We acknowledge the place the show has in our lives and our careers. It's a cornerstone. But it can't ever be the centerpiece of our lives again. If we can figure out a way to do it [as an occasional event], then I think I'd like that."

THE X-FILES, Premieres Sunday, Jan. 24, 10/9c, Fox (after the NFC Championship game)
Timeslot premiere: Monday, Jan. 25, 8/7c

